

Bullying and Suicide Among Youth with Disabilities

Staff of the North Dakota Disability Health project analyzed 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data for ND middle school and high school students to explore whether disability-related disparities exist regarding bullying and suicidal thoughts/intention. YRBS defines disability as a physical or learning disability, or a long-term health or emotional problem.

Bullying

Middle and high school students with a disability reported a higher prevalence of having been bullied, compared to students without a disability. Being bullied is linked to psychological distress, depression and thoughts of suicide.

Among *middle* school students, those with a disability had a higher prevalence of ever being bullied at school (60% vs. 48%), being bullied off school property in the past year (37% vs. 25%) and being electronically bullied in the past year (26% vs. 18%), see Figure 1. Among *high* school students, persons with a disability had a higher prevalence of being bullied at school in the past year (34% vs. 19%) and being electronically bullied in the past year (29% vs. 12%), see Figure 2.

Figure 1. Bullying by Disability Status, North Dakota *Middle School* Students

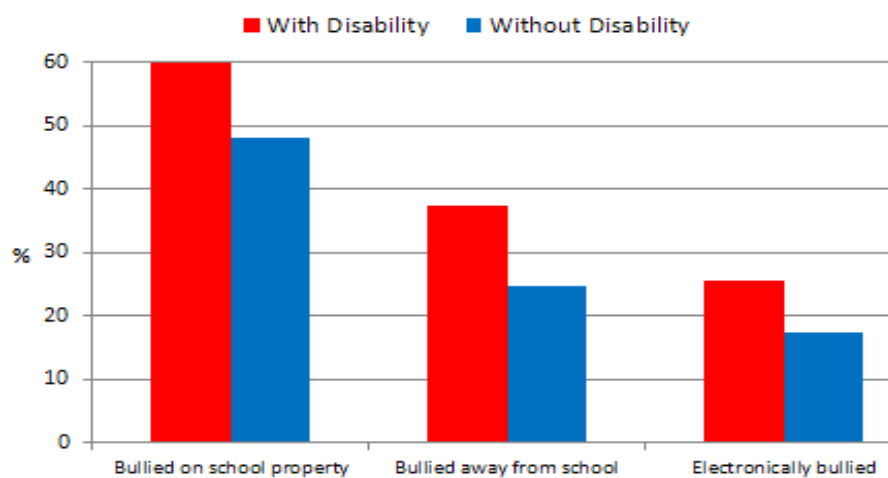
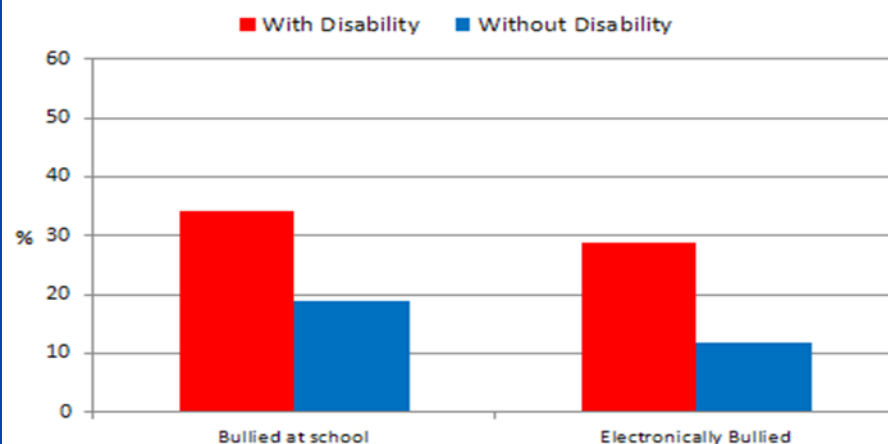


Figure 2. Bullying by Disability Status, North Dakota *High School* Students



Suicide

North Dakota *middle* school students were asked if they had ever seriously thought about killing themselves. Among students with a disability, 40.9%, indicated a yes response to this question, compared to 16.9% of students without a disability (Figure 1). Middle school students with a disability also had a higher prevalence of ever making a suicide plan and ever attempting suicide (Figure 1). Among *high* school students, those with a disability were more likely than those without a disability to have considered or attempted suicide (Figure 2). Students with disabilities were more apt to indicate they had no adults to talk to and had feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

Figure 1. Suicide-Related Measures by Disability Status, North Dakota Middle School Students

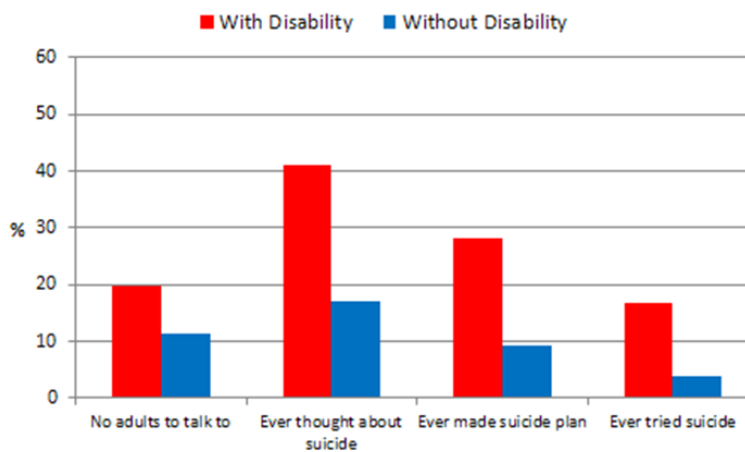
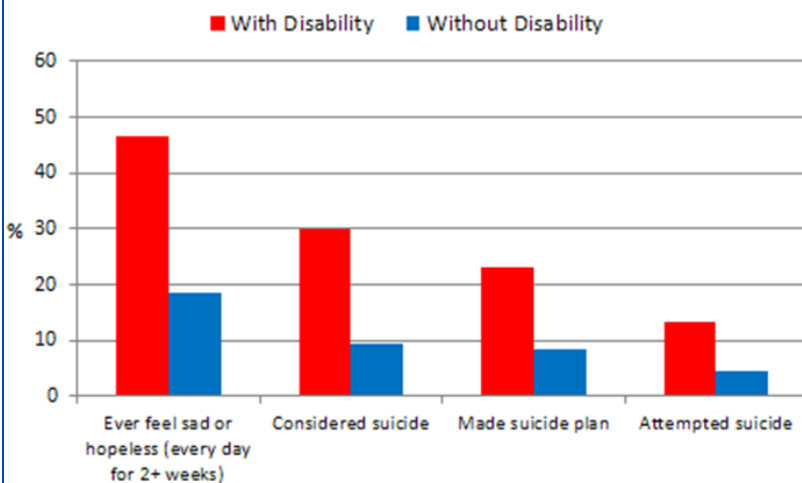


Figure 2. Suicide-Related Measures by Disability Status, North Dakota High School Students



Sources:

- Disability-Related Health Disparities Among North Dakota Adults and Adolescents, 2010: <http://www.ndcpd.org/health/NDDHP/Disability%20Related%20Health%20Disparities%202010-Kyle.pdf>



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Vision:

All people in ND have access to information and services they need to maintain good health and wellness. There are no health disparities between people with and without disabilities that are based solely on the presence of a disability.

Pay It Forward.....

Pass this information on to others who may find it helpful.